

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claim 7 without prejudice.

Please amend claims 8-11 as indicated below.

Please add claims 12-20 as indicated below.

A listing of the status of all claims 1-20 in the present patent application is provided below.

1 (Currently Amended). A method for synchronizing redundant network elements, the method comprising:

transmitting a checkpoint indication signal simultaneously to a primary element and at least one backup element, wherein each of the primary element and the at least one backup element has one or more connections to a network;

generating a first checkpoint that is indicative of a first status of the primary element associated with a first arrival time of the checkpoint indication signal at the primary element;

generating a second checkpoint that is indicative of a second status of the at least one backup element associated with a second arrival time of the checkpoint indication signal at the at least one backup element; and

comparing the first checkpoint and the second checkpoint to determine a synchronization between the primary element and the backup element.

2 (Original). The method according to claim 1, wherein the checkpoint indication signal is transmitted from the primary element, the at least one backup element or a source outside the network.

3 (Original). The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of generating a first checkpoint further comprises the steps of:

identifying a first arrival time of the checkpoint indication signal at the primary element;

finishing processing of any data arriving at the primary element before the first arrival time of the checkpoint indication signal;

suspending processing of a plurality of data arriving at the primary element after the first arrival time of the checkpoint indication signal;

generating a first checkpoint that is indicative of the status of the primary element in suspension;

transmitting the first checkpoint to the at least one backup element; and

resuming processing of the plurality of data arriving at the primary element after the first arrival time of the checkpoint indication signal.

4 (Original). The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of generating a second checkpoint further comprises the steps of:

identifying a second arrival time of the checkpoint indication signal at the at least one backup element;

finishing processing of any data arriving at the at least one backup element before the second arrival time of the checkpoint indication signal;

suspending processing of a plurality of data arriving at the at least one backup element after the second arrival time of the checkpoint indication signal; and

generating a second checkpoint that is indicative of the status of the at least one backup element in suspension.

5 (Original). The method according to claim 4 further comprising the steps of:

keeping the at least one backup element in suspension after generation of the second checkpoint;

comparing the second checkpoint with the transmitted first checkpoint;

updating the at least one backup element based on the transmitted first checkpoint if the second checkpoint does not

match the transmitted first checkpoint based on a predetermined set of criteria; and

    taking the at least one backup element out of suspension.

6 (Original). The method according to claim 4 further comprising the steps of:

    taking the at least one backup element out of suspension after generation of the second checkpoint;

    comparing the second checkpoint with the transmitted first checkpoint; and

    reporting an error if the second checkpoint does not match the transmitted first checkpoint based on a predetermined set of criteria.

7 (Cancelled).

8 (Currently Amended). At least one processor readable carrier medium for storing a computer program of instructions configured to be readable by at least one processor for instructing the at least one processor to execute a computer process for performing the method as recited in claim 1.

9 (Currently Amended). A system for synchronizing redundant

network elements, the system comprising:

means for transmitting a checkpoint indication signal simultaneously to a primary element and at least one backup element, wherein each of the primary element and the at least one backup element has one or more connections to a network;

means for generating a first checkpoint that is indicative of a first status of the primary element associated with a first arrival time of the checkpoint indication signal at the primary element;

means for generating a second checkpoint that is indicative of a second status of the at least one backup element associated with a second arrival time of the checkpoint indication signal at the at least one backup element; and

means for comparing the first checkpoint and the second checkpoint to determine a synchronization between the primary element and the backup element.

10 (Currently Amended). A method for synchronizing redundant network elements, the method comprising:

receiving at a backup element a checkpoint indication signal;

generating a first checkpoint that is indicative of a status of the backup element associated with an arrival time of

the checkpoint indication signal at the backup element;  
receiving a second checkpoint from a primary element that  
is indicative of a status of the primary element associated with  
an arrival time of the checkpoint indication signal; and  
comparing the first checkpoint and the second checkpoint to  
determine a synchronization between the primary element and the  
backup element;  
wherein the checkpoint indication signal is transmitted  
simultaneously to the primary element and the backup element.

11 (Currently Amended). A system for synchronizing redundant network elements, the system comprising:

means for receiving at a backup element a checkpoint indication signal;  
means for generating a first checkpoint that is indicative of a status of the backup element associated with an arrival time of the checkpoint indication signal at the backup element;  
means for receiving a second checkpoint from a primary element that is indicative of a status of the primary element  
associated with an arrival time of the checkpoint indication  
signal; and  
means for comparing the first checkpoint and the second checkpoint to determine a synchronization between the primary

element and the backup element;

wherein the checkpoint indication signal is transmitted simultaneously to the primary element and the backup element.

12 (New). The method according to claim 1, wherein the checkpoint indication signal is positioned similarly relative to other signals arriving for processing at the primary element and the at least one backup element.

13 (New). The system according to claim 9, wherein the checkpoint indication signal is positioned similarly relative to other signals arriving for processing at the primary element and the at least one backup element.

14 (New). The method according to claim 10, wherein the checkpoint indication signal is positioned similarly relative to other signals arriving for processing at the primary element and the at least one backup element.

15 (New). The system according to claim 11, wherein the checkpoint indication signal is positioned similarly relative to other signals arriving for processing at the primary element and the at least one backup element.

16 (New). The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of generating a first checkpoint comprises generating a plurality of first checkpoints that are indicative of a first status of a respective plurality of sessions on the primary element associated with a first arrival time of the checkpoint indication signal at the primary element, wherein the step of generating a second checkpoint comprises generating a plurality of second checkpoints that are indicative of a second status of a respective plurality of sessions on the at least one backup element associated with a second arrival time of the checkpoint indication signal at the at least one backup element, and wherein the step of comparing the first checkpoint and the second checkpoint comprises comparing the plurality of first checkpoints and the plurality of second checkpoints to determine a synchronization between the primary element and the backup element.

17 (New). The system according to claim 9, wherein the means for generating a first checkpoint comprises means for generating a plurality of first checkpoints that are indicative of a first status of a respective plurality of sessions on the primary element associated with a first arrival time of the checkpoint

indication signal at the primary element, wherein the means for generating a second checkpoint comprises means for generating a plurality of second checkpoints that are indicative of a second status of a respective plurality of sessions on the at least one backup element associated with a second arrival time of the checkpoint indication signal at the at least one backup element, and wherein the means for comparing the first checkpoint and the second checkpoint comprises means for comparing the plurality of first checkpoints and the plurality of second checkpoints to determine a synchronization between the primary element and the backup element.

18 (New). The method according to claim 10, wherein the step of generating a first checkpoint comprises generating a plurality of first checkpoints that are indicative of a status of a respective plurality of sessions on the backup element associated with an arrival time of the checkpoint indication signal at the backup element.

19 (New). The system according to claim 11, wherein the means for generating a first checkpoint comprises means for generating a plurality of first checkpoints that are indicative of a status of a respective plurality of sessions on the backup element

associated with an arrival time of the checkpoint indication signal at the backup element.

20 (New). The method according to claim 1, further comprising:  
generating the checkpoint indication signal periodically.